

they have a dollie." I wish you could have seen their happy faces when Father Christmas handed them a *real* doll for their *very* own. The little boys were given soldiers, drums, trumpets, paints, etc. I find that soldiers and drums are the most popular toys, and you can imagine what a noise there was in the room by the time they all had something, especially as some of the penny toys were mouth organs. They went home with beaming faces and full hands, and I have since been told by many little friends that the Christmas tree "wasn't 'arf all right." This expression is superlative, and means that things could not possibly have been better. They send their best thanks to the "ladies who sent them the beautiful toys." You would love the Hoxton children; they are so wonderfully affectionate, and respond to the slightest attention paid to them. I suppose it is the result of the lack of open affection shown in their own homes. Of course these people love their children just as much as anybody else, but there is no time for the outward signs. The cry is so often, "Get along out of my way; I'm washing. Take the baby and go in the street and play. Shan't I be glad when school begins again and I can get rid of you all." Then, of course, some of them have bad homes, and then it is so difficult to make any sort of impression on the children. One day I was teaching them the Third Commandment, and when I asked what it meant they answered promptly, "You mustn't swear," and I said, "Yes, you know some people never say God's name except to swear," and a little boy of 9 looked up at me and said, "Yes, that's what my mother does." He was an exceptionally troublesome boy, and I had often thought I should have to get rid of him, but after that I was determined to keep him at all costs, and he certainly has improved. Of course the parents are not all like that; but even the little children sometimes use dreadful language, and they do steal and tell lies, and sometimes we get rather disheartened about it all. But after all we can only do our best, hope on and

pray on, not bothering about the visible result. I hope I have not written too long a letter. I wish I could have been at Ambleside this week, but it was quite impossible. My warmest thanks to you all and every good wish for a successful Conference.—Yours very sincerely,

MABEL CONDER.

AMBLESIDE CONFERENCE, 1911.

In spite of bad weather, this week-end Conference appears from all accounts to have been the best of any ever held. From beginning to end there was no hitch; all was enjoyable and inspiring. The following students were up for it:—J. J. Aitken, E. C. Allen, M. Benyon-Winsor, G. M. Bernau, H. C. Biggar, G. Bradford, T. E. Brown, M. Butler, D. Chalmers, G. Clendinnen, K. Clendinnen, C. Cooper, H. M. Cordeux, J. E. Crayden, M. E. Davis, A. C. Drury, A. Duyvis, C. E. Edwards, M. F. Evans, L. C. Faunce, G. Flewker, E. E. Flower, H. M. Fountain, M. E. Franklin, E. Frost, Mrs. Tod (*née* Garnier), M. K. Glascott, B. M. Goode, L. Gray, R. Hart, C. E. Henderson, W. S. Henderson, M. S. Lobjoit, W. L. Lorimer, K. Loveday, L. M. Macdonald, J. Macfarlane, M. MacSheehy, C. Mann, L. H. Morris, A. M. Neild, P. C. Nevitt-Bennett, M. E. Owen, E. A. Parish, E. M. Pike, H. E. Pollard, K. M. Rowbotham, M. E. Saunders, V. R. Saunders, Harriet Smeeton, Hilda Smeeton, E. A. Smith, J. H. Smith, H. M. Stubbs, Mrs. Esslemont (*née* Thomson), O. Thorp, D. Viney, G. Viney, R. J. Watters, E. West-Symes, J. Wilkinson, M. Willis, E. F. A. Winter, F. W. Young.

The following students sent messages of regret at not being present and good wishes for the success of the Conference:—L. A. Bell, G. Biggar, G. Bradley, E. M. Brookes, D. Brownell, A. M. Cox, E. Crowe, M. Dixon, — East, A. C. Edgar, G. E. M. Francis, T. Gilbert, V. Good,

L. M. Gore, F. Judd, M. W. Kitching, H. M. Lake (Mrs. Bourne), O. McConnell, F. Mucklow, D. Oliver, V. Parker, S. Smyth, D. Smyth, E. Thomasset, M. Trembeth, H. Watson, H. E. Wix.

In opening the first session Miss Parish referred to the death of Miss Edith Williams, and the sympathy of the students with her relations and friends was expressed.

Congratulations and good wishes were offered to Miss Lake upon her marriage.

A letter from Miss Conder was read, in which she kindly told us something of her work in Hoxton.

Miss Parish, on behalf of Miss Mason, drew our attention to a pension scheme for women with exceptionally favourable terms. Information may be obtained regarding this from Mrs. Harold Lock.

A letter from Frl. Diez was also read; in which she asked if any present or old student would like to take up a correspondence with a German girl whose address she has given Miss E. Kitching.

During the week the following kind telegram was received from Mrs. Dallas Yorke:—"Old Students, Scale How, Ambleside. My thoughts are with you in warm sympathy and desire for happy and fruitful Conference.—FRANCES YORKE, San Remo."

MISS MASON'S TALK.

Friday, April 21st, 1911.—Miss Mason began her delightful and inspiring talk by alluding to us all as one body, and not an inconsiderable one by any means; one having a very definite bit of the world's work to do, exercising force and spreading influence. It is nothing to be proud of, as everyone has influence.

This is a very nice world, and it is Miss Mason's belief that the times in which we live are the very best times that

have ever been. But best times require the best equipment, and the three following articles of baggage will be very useful to every one of us:—

1. *Knowledge*.—As a Union and as a College we think much of *knowledge*. Knowledge is a wonderful delight and joy, and the mind needs food as much as the body. Those people who keep down their natural appetite, who really have not enough to live upon, and yet who are too sensitive to be thought poor, who say they are never really hungry, are living in a state of inanition.

There is another state of inanition—inanition of mind, when it is not duly fed or kept up. Knowledge is not to be taken at a gulp, and it must be regular and continuous. Do not let us mistake *information* for *knowledge*. Information does not sustain, does not feed, and is deadly dull.

The difference between knowledge and information is that *information is without the vitalising idea*.

Knowledge causes immediate delight, and is like a gift, which involves two—the giver and the receiver; for where there is knowledge there must be the vitalised mind to take it, to keep it, and to live upon it.

It is delightful to be endowed with a keen appetite for knowledge. There are many virtuous people who collect information who are like a walking encyclopædia. There is hardly a subject unknown to those people; yet they are usually without knowledge. They lack that vital touch of the delight which knowledge brings; with this vital idea comes real joy. This is easily seen with children, for knowledge gives power. Children love to talk with working men, because they can so gain real knowledge of interesting things and processes.

A shepherd in this district had three flocks of sheep with their lambs which had to be ear-marked. The flocks were mixed, but he recognised the lambs, some of which were only ten days old, by their faces, and he marked them correctly. This is knowledge, because it contains a vital

idea. True knowledge is inspiring, it is infinite, it is part of the almighty power of God, and as we say Love is God we can also say Knowledge is God.

To come to practical knowledge, which has a much narrower scope, we who teach must increase our knowledge every day. We must gain knowledge which seizes upon one. We must get a firm grip and so make it quite our own. Again, we must have definite progressive knowledge. Let us all have our *métier*, scientific, artistic, or literary. Let us have definite knowledge of history, of the characters in standard works, in some branch of French or German literature.

For the third kind let us have *professional knowledge*. In a *Pall Mall Gazette* Miss Mason read that Society ladies have more knowledge than college-bred women. This is because the Society woman has to know a great many things—in fact, to know about everything that is going on and being talked about. She can often play the piano and speak French and German. So that it is necessary for us teachers to go on with the so-called accomplishments, but which really are necessities. Let us take piano lessons, and do as we did at Ambleside, spend part of our holidays abroad working up our languages. We must do this in order to compete with the present-day "ordinary" governess, who is often very clever and a wonderful linguist. We must be prepared for children whose parents have not an exalted idea of education. So let us follow our motto and keep up everything for the children's sake. There is pure joy to be had in learning languages, and the more we learn the more power we have for learning.

2. *Gaiety*.—It is a good thing to have what Mr. Rooper called *Gaiety* in Education. Do not let us be too strenuous and take life too seriously, being only determined to get through the work set, and therefore lose the joy which there should be in every lesson. If a child should tell a fib, for instance, do not let us look upon him as hopeless; it does

not mean that he is not delightfully full of promise. The secret of this gaiety is the absence of self-occupation. Do not let us think about ourselves, but sympathise with the children and laugh with them. Let us find joy in life, in nature, in the children, in art, sunshine, and blue skies.

By gaiety is not meant flippancy. There must never be flippant treatment of a subject, and let us avoid flippant literature and conversation. Let us reverence that which is below, that which is on a level, and that which is above us.

3. *Hope*.—This age is wanting in *hopefulness*. It is full of charity; everyone cares for others and is concerned in the interests of others. But we do not look forward to anything; we content ourselves with a restless round of amusements, and cannot be quiet in the gladness of hope. The reason is a sad one. It is because our hope for the light to come has become so dim, and we do not know what to hope for. In the time of belief in harps of gold and golden crowns things were more definite. We want a definite spring of hope; and let us take a broad outlook, and realise that our spirits make progress; that our powers of enjoying, serving, hoping and loving will go on; our work in French, stars, botany, goes on. So let us cultivate in children the importance of the present life.

The effect of this age is that we consider nothing worth while, nothing is of any consequence; we think too lightly of life. Some people think that temperament has such a great deal to do with us; but it is all nonsense, as mind is far greater than body. God is a God of hope, and when our fountain of hope runs dry we know quite well where to go to get it refreshed.